

The Sound of Thunder

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Summary: He remembered thinking it had something to do with static build up in the air. And then, he wasn't thinking much at all.

1. Chapter 1

A/N: I have a feeling this story is going to change it's direction a hundred times before I actually get anywhere with it... But for now I guess enjoy this horrible cliffhanger of a beginning! I should also say, I've never seen Riders of Berk so if this deviates from that canon as it most likely will, I'm calling it creative license ;)

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><p>He remembered thinking it had something to do with static build up in the air. The way that skin prickled and hairs rose on end right before a lightning strike. It had to do with the friction between his leg, metal and the padding; it fed through a strange sort of feedback loop with the charge build up in the atmosphere. He had theorized many different threads of equations and strings of numbers for explanations, curiosity entirely piqued by the strangeness of the situation. A missing limb aching right before a big weather phenomena- unheard of. He couldn't seem to explain why Gobber felt nothing, when he had two very large metal contraptions for limbs himself, or why the throbbing spiked in different ways depending on the event. The tingling sensation where his toes used to be right before a snow storm hit, the dull ache in his non-existent shin when the winds picked up, the shooting pain in his ankle when it started raining. Hiccup couldn't find any trace of anything like it in the history books, or in the elders. The strangest incident was the static shock in his kneecap milliseconds before lightning struck the Great Hall.<p>

He remembered brushing it off for a while, acting like it was just some unfortunate coincidence or unusual talent. Hiccup was the dragon rider now, he had responsibilities and expectations to uphold, so what if his metal leg acted strangely on occasion, right? Hiccup stopped researching it desperately, stopped mentioning the little twinges of sensation to anyone, and let it become an unsolved mystery for the time being.

Of course, the gods couldn't allow Hiccup to get by easily.

It had been a normal morning in Berk, somewhat cloudy and cold, no sight of greenery anywhere, generally unpleasant villager interactions; Hiccup had been in a particularly good mood. After taking Toothless for his morning ride, he'd met up with the others, dealt with the dragons food supply issues, and headed off for a mid afternoon date with Astrid.

Hiccup knew they'd talked for hours, that the sky had been a perfect off gray, and he could feel the press of Astrid's lips to his cheek vividly. He remembered the flash of her smile, the way he'd sighed and felt like floating, and how perfectly the sunset had silhouetted her as she walked down the trail to her home. Then, quite suddenly, static.

The pinpricks had started with a ferocity he'd never experienced before, shooting like trails of fire from some vague point in his Not Leg and ending nowhere in particular. He could hear his own cries for Toothless echoing back at him, the feeling of stones pressing against his palms and then his cheek as he collapsed, and a bright light. The last thing he remembered was the smell of the air pressing into him, his thoughts trailing away from him, jagged words cracking in half, and the sound of thunder.

* * *

><p>Growing up in Berk, there weren't too many sun shining, birds chirping kind of days. Typically, it was foggy, raining, and miserable with the added bonus of a large helping of snow nine months of the year. Living so near to an ocean front and on a cliff edge, the weather was typically pretty severe. There were lots of gale force winds, snowstorms, side ways rain, hail, things of that nature. Lightning storms were common.</p>

Hiccup knew a guy when he was little, who had a metal arm and a tendency to use wild flailing gestures while telling stories; he remembered hearing how one day, he'd been out in the hills when lightning had struck him flat. He'd survived, barely, but was bed ridden for months. Even after he'd supposedly recuperated, he'd never really been quite right after. He'd get dizziness spells lasting for hours, his eye sight began to fail him and he went completely deaf in one ear. But, Hiccup supposed, living was better than nothing, and he never seemed so upset about his injuries that he couldn't work up the energy for a rousing explanation of what had happened to him. Amnesia hampering his factual retelling, the stories were interesting in how creative they got each time.

It seemed strange to him too, how despite the Skrill's existence and it's own brand of lightning infused fury, the after effects never seemed as long lasting. Granted, not many existed in the Berk area,

and they tended to keep their distance. The largely inquisitive area of Hiccups brain supposed there was an electrical difference in what the Skrill charged itself with and what naturally crackled across the sky. The heat of a true lightning bolt had to be more intense, or the build up on the Skrill not as long. He'd heard of villagers in the past who'd died on site from lightning storms, the worst a Skrill seemed to do was temporarily cause language confusion and burns. Some said after you woke up from unconsciousness after a Skrill attack, your skin felt stretched and your eyelids burned; you had to watch out though because the shock was sometimes enough to stop your heart.

When Hiccup woke up, it was with the pounding of someone's fists on his chest, with stuttering, gasping breaths, and ringing, endless ringing that drowned out all other sounds. Then, blissfully, nothing.

2. Of Fire and Voids

A/N: I apologize for the wait here! I can't even really say I had a good excuse, I'm just really out of practice in writing and wasn't happy with my rough drafts. For those of you who favorited and followed, I very much appreciate your interest wow! This chapter is a bit filler-y but there's some important aspects, I'm sure they aren't too hard to spot ;) Hope you enjoy!

* * *

><p>He was standing in a field.</p>

The sky was a mass of swirling stars and deep angry clouds, the purples and vibrant blues clashed and mixed and the air itself seemed to shrink towards some indeterminable point around his head. He wanted to look away, to shield his eyes and duck down until the storm had past, but couldn't tear his eyes away from the sight. Two points of burning green star light seemed to stare back at him, and he could not look away.

The air vibrated, a thick, lazy wave of pure energy pushed back the grass and the trees and ripped the roots from the soil- it was heading towards him, destroying everything. There was no earth beyond it, only a myriad of spiraling dark shades and twisted violet hues; stars and black voids and an expanse of nothing at all. And it was heading towards him, increasingly large and omnipotent.

I should move, he thought distantly.

The void picked up speed, growing more and more immense, a loud reverberating groan from the universe itself increased in volume more and more. The noise was overwhelming, he felt his eardrums pop and a warmth begin to seep from his ears but he could not move to even flinch. The earth was shattering apart, splitting from itself and disappearing from existence, great rivets and cracks snaked towards him and he thought he would fall through the earth, he found the willpower somewhere to close his eyes and braced himself. And suddenly, it was quiet. Hiccup blinked, he was standing on a cliff facing the immensity of a great nothing. He felt himself tip vaguely forward, and couldn't move his legs to balance himself.

Some part of him felt, rather than heard, "Wake up, young one.
Lytt. "

And then, he was falling. Lights flashed above him, then below him, and then he wasn't sure which direction he was facing. He was crashing through glass and nothing at all, he felt a weight pushing against him, pressing his heart through his lungs, and he gasped.

* * *

><p>Waking up happened in layers. First there was an awareness of time passing, of a distant feeling of movement. Hiccup felt blurry, hard to pinpoint; his own awareness was jolted and vague, his thoughts a disconnected string of concepts and no concrete words.</p>

Then there was solidity, a feeling of a soft pressure on his back, like someone touching him through layers of fabric. I'm unconscious, he thought. His own mind was out of focus and over saturated but he had the very astute observation that he existed. Hiccup, my name is Hiccup.

Finally, there was burning. Pain rolled over him in waves, it was sudden and vast and he felt washed away in the existence of so many sensations, stripped away from himself except for child like fragmented ideas. And he was burning beneath it all.

Hiccup ached, his skin felt stretched and peeled back and wrong in at least a hundred different ways. He could feel pinpricks of fire twining around his arms, his legs- his bran felt hollowed out and bruised. The shrill ringing hadn't died down, he vaguely wondered why someone would be jingling alarm bells so continuously and so close to his head and distantly felt himself furrow his eyebrows in response. Someone was shaking him, it was sending signals to his head that burned like acid along with the already swirling mass of confused thoughts and burning heat and he wanted it to stop. He twitched a finger in anger, a brazenly bold move that evidently went completely unnoticed as the shaking continued. There was a strange mumbling noise permeating the air around him, like someone was speaking through water; in his dazed state he panicked for a moment before realizing, no he was breathing- painfully, but that was indeed air.

A hand slapped his cheek sharply, and his eyes flew open in surprise. There was a great blurry shape staring back at him, outlined in wispy red. He saw vague outlines of a mouth moving slowly, like tar slowly dripping out of a bucket. He thought maybe it was melting, it was burning warm around him, he too was melting away in the heat. His arms would melt down to his fingers and his fingers would plop off onto the ground, he knew this very suddenly and knew he should do something about it.

"It's hot," he said. The burning in his chest and brain growled angrily in response. "I'm boiling," he tried again. The blurry lips slowly moved again. He frowned at them, trying to will them to focus, but instead his brain chose that exact moment to violently revolt. He closed his eyes against the waves of agony rushing down his neck and into his veins, and felt his spine curl in response.

There was a pressure against his curled fist, where his fingernails

had bitten angrily into the skin of his palm. A small pinprick of safety against torrents of white hot fury. It felt cool and calloused and small.

He wondered if it was his mother. Hiccup managed a small smile, blearily peering at the pale hand in his. His mother always held his hand when he was sick, she'd softly tell him stories of great far off lands and even greater dragons and conquests and pet his hair back from his forehead. He heard no stories now, though. Hiccup hoped she could tell him the one about the blonde viking lady who had saved her entire village with only a sword, when he woke up again. That one was his favorite, the protagonist was cunning and quick and took down more dragons than all the other villagers combined. He would make sure she told him one of ice and snow because he was done with fire, he felt he'd probably been done with it for the rest of his life.

And bells, he was done with ringing sounds.

If only he could find the source of it, maybe he could frown them into submission, because Hiccup was very tired and abruptly felt the overwhelming desire to sleep. Although the immense heat and constant noise made it difficult. His leg was the worst, it was centered mainly there like someone was cooking his shin slowly and spreading heat outwards from that point. Hiccup was very sure he wouldn't taste great and resolved to tell the leg cooking offenders immediately after he could work up the energy. Or even once he could work up the energy to open his eyes.

The soft coolness was joined by a more startling one above his eyebrows; it felt like Valhalla, he felt himself let out air he wasn't aware he'd been holding.

"Th'nks Mom," he tried to mutter, falling into a deeper and more solid sleep, not plagued by shifting glowing eyes or mass plains of unsettling nothing. Instead he dreamt of black wings, blonde hair, and bright crackling lights shooting across grey rolling skies.

3. Cause and Effect

A/N: I am deeply sorry for the wait here folks, things have been awfully hectic and honestly just incredibly awful, but at the very least I write better when I'm upset. Thank you for your patience and your story follows, they are lovely to see :) Heads up, this chapter contains a large amount of angst, and its most likely only going to go downhill from here :/ And so, without further ado Chapter 3!

* * *

><p>He remembered screaming, the first time consciousness fully wrapped itself around him and breathed him in.</p>

At least, he thinks he was screaming. It had been dark, his eyes had slowly fluttered open without any sort of fan fare, and he saw his father, sleeping propped up on a chair beside his bed. He'd smiled fondly, before noticing the age lines and the dark circles that clouded Stoick's broad features, the tense lines in his shoulders that were present even in sleep. How long was I out? He'd thought, slowly pulling himself up into a sitting position. He felt warm, like

an ever present sweltering heat kind of warm, and his muscles twitched in a strange disjointed way. The worst was the way his head pounded off tempo, like a rushing current was swirling back and forth through his skull.

"_Dad..." he blinked in confusion, when he didn't hear the rasp of his own voice, or the pitchiness of it's awesome pubescent glory.

"_Dad?" It hit him suddenly, that he wasn't hearing anything. No wind through the wood planks, or shriek of nearby dragons- no howling of wolves, nothing.

He'd felt a strange vibration in his chest, a wet heat rushing to his cheeks and a bone deep terror shaking everything apart. His dad jolted awake, and held down his flailing arms all the while his lips mumbling some strange underwater murmur that Hiccup didn't understand. Stoic was trying to be soothing, to calm him down he was sure, but all Hiccup could see was the vibrant fear and panic reflected back at him in his father's eyes; the weakness they showed sent a shiver through Hiccup's very being, and the sorrow lying just barely underneath filled him with a dread he couldn't comprehend.

Hiccup had cried and flailed for hours, in some denial form of shock he thought but he also thought that was a perfectly reasonable response to finding out you were basically deaf. Eventually, Toothless broke down the door separating him from the main area of the house, and simply plopped his head and wide knowing eyes onto Hiccup's chest, breathing in slowly and forcing Hiccup to breathe with him until he calmed down. Something in the way Toothless and him usually interacted breached whatever panic mode Hiccup had thrown himself into, the way that Toothless still understood him and vice versa even without verbal communication gave him some semblance of normalcy he supposed. Enough that he could get a solid grip on the reality of the situation.

He was deaf. Or mostly so. Deaf, and vaguely singed it seemed. His muscles felt over tense and broken, bruised maybe. His head swarmed and pulsed with every sudden movement and he felt hot, not quite feverish but uncomfortably warm as if he'd been out in the sun and fell asleep. Something wasn't quite connecting either, there was a gap in his sense of time that was throwing him even more for a loop; why was he in this bed, feeling beat up and shaken apart and deaf? He remembered something about Astrid, maybe an outing of some kind. But Astrid hated him didn't she? Or... no. No she didn't anymore. And dragons, Toothless, they were good, amazing even.

Gods why is it so hard to think? Hiccup winced and grabbed at his hair angrily.

He felt his dad place a large hand on his back, rubbing in circles comfortingly. It was startling to see Stoic look so gentle... so fragile and afraid. Hiccup couldn't bring himself to meet his eyes.

It was one thing for Stoic the Vast to have a son with a missing foot, a story of bravery to tell children and inspire the villagers or whatever. It was his ultimate 'mark of true viking hood' in many ways, and he was sort of alright with it most days, even vaguely proud. But a deaf son? That was it he was back to square one, except instead of being hated and ignored it would be pitying looks and

uncomfortable winces and over protectiveness.

_Oh gods, how am I going to fly Toothless? _He remembered needing a cheat sheet, or... maybe he didn't so much anymore. There'd been the incident with the big great dragon, he thinks that was how he lost his foot in the first place. He also remembered listening to the wind, relying on twitches and chirps from Toothless, the feeling of the wind to tell him where the currents were. Maybe sound wasn't so bad, the wind usually howled past him anyways it was hard to hear anything. Maybe he would be okay there.

But the people, the villagers...

His dad was wrapping him in a hug abruptly, he felt his eyes widen before feeling the burnt, red sting feeling of his cheeks and the wet warmth tracing its way down his chin. Apparently random fits of crying were a thing he was doing now. Great. It wasn't that he didn't feel sad- or more appropriately, desperate and crazed and sickened down to his toes- but he hadn't expected the sudden emotional change. He was scared, and panicked, and angry at his own lack of understanding, there was heartbroken down there too but it was lost amongst the masses of other conflicting emotions. Mostly, he felt exhausted and disoriented if he was going to be honest with himself. He hugged his father back, hoping that maybe he could leech understanding off of him, that by being close to someone so infinite it would solve everything.

When he was a kid he used to think Stoic was strong enough to fix anything, toys, boats, people. He used to dream he could reach one hand into Valhalla and pluck out his mother from all the warriors and pull her back to the land of the living purely through will. If Hiccup closed his eyes tight enough, held on tight enough, wished and prayed hard enough, maybe Stoic would be strong enough for the both of them. Childishly, he hoped fervently, that Stoic was strong enough to fix this. To fix him.

He felt Toothless nudge his back softly, a churr vibrating gently through Hiccup, and he let himself cry.

End
file.